

# Wellness Programs in the Workplace Essay

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## Introduction

Over the last several decades, an epidemic of “lifestyle diseases” has developed in the United States. In response, employers, in an attempt to increase productivity and decrease health insurance costs, have created wellness programs to combat the growing trend of unhealthy living habits. This paper will discuss the different components of a wellness program, explore a typical employer’s overall wellness strategy, and analyze incentives and trends in common wellness programs in America.

The frequency of unhealthy lifestyle choices such as inactivity, poor nutrition, tobacco use and alcohol consumption are the driving factors of today’s chronic diseases: diabetes, heart disease, and chronic pulmonary conditions. These diseases have become a major issue and burden as they lead to decreased quality of life, premature death and disability, and increased health care cost and premiums. Furthermore, while chronic diseases were once thought to be restricted to older age groups, younger generations are now becoming more affected. This shift not only adds to the economic burden but also contributes to the loss of productivity due to absence from work and also reduced performance while at work.

## Background

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identified four key behaviors –

inactivity, poor nutrition, tobacco use, and frequent alcohol consumption – as primary causes of chronic disease in the United States, resulting in an increase of diabetes, heart disease, and chronic pulmonary conditions. These chronic conditions have become a major burden in the United States, as they lead to decreased quality of life and premature death and disability. The growing concern for the American people is the cost of treating ...

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